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ABSTRACT

Theories of Piaget, Erickson, Freud, and other behavioral psychologists are reviewed in an examination of the development of adolescent self-concept. The implications, for the physical education teacher or athletic coach, of the adolescent's self-consciousness and egocentricity are discussed. It is suggested that the physical education teacher is perceived by the adolescent as a role model and that the teacher must be aware that he or she mirrors, through behavior, the intrinsic worth of sport and competition in society. It is also suggested that the teacher is an important catalyst for providing effective self-discovery for the adolescent through play, games, and movement experiences. In a cautionary statement, it is pointed out that students enter into athletic activities with high intrinsic motivation and that grading and awards systems may decrease the strength of this internal motivation and strengthen the need for external rewards. Suggestions are made for enhancing the adolescent need for self-expression and creativity through the enjoyable activities of play and the socialization potential in team sports. (JD)

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"SELF-CONCEPT AND ROLE MODELING: THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION"

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"Self-Concept and Role Modeling: Their Relationships To Secondary School Physical Education"

The major concerns of this presentation are two-fold: firstly, to relate implications of adolescent self-concept formation and secondly, the attendant importance of role modeling to physical education.

Let me begin by posing a question that, on the surface, seems simplistic. How do we develop and form our perception of reality? Because human development is multifaceted and extraordinarily complex, we have no simple answer. The behaviorists, as characterized by Skinner and Hull, profess that we learn as a result of reacting to external stimuli; the psychoanalytic school of human development was initiated by Sigmund Freud who held that human sexuality is the basic source of energy to be discharged on certain objects, accompanied by pleasurable sensations. Fundamentally, a person continues to be what he or she became during the first five or six years of life. Erick Erickson utilized Freud's paradigm to devise his psychodynamic theory. Erickson's stage theory of development is characterized by eight stages of human growth. The transition from stage to stage is caused by a crisis. If this crisis is successfully handled, the person then enters the next level in the hierachy. I will discuss Erickson's fifth stage which is adolescence, and its relevance to self-concept in a few minutes.

The humanistic theory of human development perceives man as basically good. This philosophy is currently championed by such people as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow who profess the environmentalist position that given proper conditions of nurturance, man's developmental potentialities are virtually unlimited in scope or direction. To them, changes in human development occur in quantitative steps rather than in qualitative levels.

It is only in the last ten to fifteen years that developmental psychological research has begun to replace the behavioral paradigm. Not much attention was paid to prominent developmentalists such as Jean Piaget until recently, even

though his classic works were completed in the thirties. Two reasons for the exclusion of Piaget's work from psychological circles center around his use of observation instead of empirical studies for data collection and the fact that his work is difficult to read in the original or in translation. The work of Piaget was brought to the United States in the 1950's through such men as Jerome Bruner.

Piaget posits that human intelligence is the acquisition, absolution, and use of knowledge. Learning is a function of development, it cannot explain development. Our sensory perception of reality is qualitatively different, and as one becomes older their perception of reality relies less on sensory perceptions.

It is important to understand Piaget's concept of development before his theory can be understood. He states that development is an inherent, unalterable, voluntary process, yet within this developmental process he locates a series of distinct phases and subphases. There stages are qualitatively differentiated with each succeeding stage subsuming rather than substituting for the former stage.

Without going into somewhat boring detail, I will highlight five Piagetian tenets that relate directly to adolescence:

1. cognition is a personal experience-way of storage, origin, and use are based upon one's personal acquisition of knowledge;
2. adolescents have gained the ability to explore or speculate probalistic situations;
3. any abstract-thinking must be grounded in concrete concepts-abstract thinking, like a balloon, must be tethered with a string, the concrete, or it will be lost;
4. the teenager can make propositions and understand the subsets of the whole-while realizing that the whole is greater than its parts;

5. the adolescent can realize that cause and effect are a pre-requisite to abstract thinking.

Hopefully, we now have an answer, although somewhat superficial, as to how the teenage develops and forms a perception of reality. But, as the title of this presentation states, we are concerned with the formation of self-concept and the importance of role-modeling to that concept. Please allow me to relate the adolescent "state of being" to this concern.

Let us remember that the developmental epoch of adolescence is a relatively new phenomonon.

The enactment of child labor laws and obligatory school attendance laws around 1900 created a new subculture: adolescence. A child today enters this epoch through the onset of physical changes and social expectations and exists the stage as an end product of socialization.

We fully expect this period to be filled with psycho-social conflicts. Anna Freud felt that this conflict was almost inherent in order to have a settled adulthood. Erickson says that we strive in adolescence between what we were and what we will be: the who am I/psych-social conflict.

The adolescent in our modern American society is forced to attend school; is perceived as a marginal family member; and in increasing numbers, dependent upon the family for school financing into their early 20's. The question can be asked if we are creating a new epoch of extended adolescence?

If we view the self as the individual as known to the individual, the self-image can be viewed as an attitude toward an object, and like all attitudes, it has several dimensions.

I would like to briefly discuss four of these. Let us remember that there is reason to think that changes in these dimensions would be disturbing or uncomfortable for the individual.

The first dimension is self-consciousness; it refers to the salience of the self to the individual. How does one prioritize his/her tasks in relationship to his/her quality of accomplishment and how others perceive them in a given situation.

The second dimension of the self-image is stability. How does the adolescent regard themselves in importance when related to a given situation.

The third dimension is self-esteem. How does one's global positive or negative attitude toward him/herself affect his/her behavioral pattern.

The final dimension is the perceived self. While technically not an integral part of the phenomonal self, viewing one's self as others view them is an important variable in the establishment of self-image.

In a 1973 study by Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg, adolescents between 12 and 14, relative to younger children, were shown to exhibit heightened self-consciousness, greater instability of the self-image, slightly lower self-esteem, and a less favorable view of the opinions held of them by significant others. The researchers revealed that disturbances in self-images are fairly common at adolescence and that environmental factors may have a strong affect in producing them. Youth who enter junior high school appeared to undergo more self-image stress than youth of the same age still in elementary school. This phenomonon was found in the transition from junior to senior high school.

The differentiation of self: who was I, who will I be, and where am I headed, who am I now, or am I attractive?, is referred to as adolescent ego-centrism by Dr. David Elkind. The so often posed self-inquiry of "if I am so unique, how can life's everyday troubles happen to me?" becomes the adolescent rationalization for overcoming the statistical probabilities of pregnancy, depression, drug addiction, and unpaid attention to physical fitness. This state of reality goes back to the teenager's ability to deal with reality in terms of

abstraction rather than by sensory perception. The inability to grasp the intrinsic need for life-long physical fitness can overcome the efforts of the most dedicated teacher. The young athlete who predicates his future on stardom in the N.B.A. is another example of adolescent ego-centrism overcoming the realities of everyday life. This characteristic of adolescent self-perception is the basis of a 1975 study involving youth team members.

It was concluded that the young players' judgments of their team success and team failure are quite ego-centered. That is, when their team wins, the player wants the credit, but when the team loses, the player places the blame elsewhere. When the players lose they place the blame on environmental variables such as the officials, field conditions, luck, or the way the wind was blowing. These variables do not take away from their individual efforts and abilities and therefore aid in preserving the self-image in the positive range.

This study may imply that consistent sucess-failure experiences may socialize the child to achievement behavior. Thus, consistent failure may lead to low achievement behavior, and players who feel they have low ability will give-up and drop-out. However, frequent success may lead to more effort and persistence and the attribution of occasional losses to unstable factors, that is, expectancy of success on future occasions.

We, as professional teachers, coaches, and counselors are well aware that sports can be utilized as a means for lessening feelings of inferiority. However, we are also cognizant of teachers and coaches, serving as role models for our adolescents, who heighten inferiority feelings through the sport medium.

Most normal people possess feelings of inferiority to some degree and want sucess, popularity and admiration from their fellows. Moreover, we can help students gain group acceptance through athletic successes by un-playing accomplishments and downplaying failures. The student gains a feeling of security

within the social group--a high order need very common in teenagers. Our physical education classes must offer the student an environment where winning and losing are not the ultimate measures of accomplishment. Competition must be placed in its proper perspective by the classroom instructor who must be aware of his/her responsibilities as role models for the adolescent.

The word competition itself is derived from the Latin word, competere, meaning "to seek together". It usually implies a contest with another or others, and often involves evaluation of one's performance in comparative terms: that is, in comparison with the performance of others. As professionals, we must aid the student to compete with his own previous record, or with the records extablished in the student's own class. When the stress on competition begins to over-emphasize proving one's self superior to another to gain some award, praise or honor by excelling another we are again placing winning and losing as the only two criteria for accomplishment. As the importance of excelling competitors increases and the drive to win accentuates, competition can begin to shade into agression. It might serve us well to heed a story about the young brother of the 1978 American League Cy Young Award winner, Ron Guidry.

Mr. Guidry's little brother is mentally retarded and regularly competes in the Special Olympics. Ron related to a writer for the Washington Post how his brother taught him the real meaning of competition. Running the 100 yard dash in the Special Olympics, the younger Guidry inevitably breaks on top; stops around the 75 yard mark clearly 10 yards in front of the other runners and then patiently waits until all have passed him and then with the smile of a true champion, crosses the finish line last. Puzzled, Ron asked his brother to explain his strange behavior. This supposedly mentally defective youngster displaying more wisdom and humanistic insight than most adults, told his older brother that inside he knew he could outrace his competitors, but that he wanted

them to have a chance of knowing how good it feels to win. Thus, the young Guidry boy places winning and losing in their proper perspective: not as concrete or set goals, but only relative to the competition itself. We must not use winning and losing as terminal objectives in our physical education classes; they should be relegated to the peripherary of our aims. If we, as I suggest, de-emphasize winning and losing in our classes, how can we motivate the adolescent to participate in a competitive environment?

One cognitive theory attempting to explain why a person engages in an activity holds that when an individual observes another person engaging in an activity he judges that person to be intrinsically motivated to the extent that there are no salient extrinsic rewards present to which the behavior can be attributed.

D. J. Bem, writing in Awareness In Experimental Social Psychology, contends that self-perception is a special case of other-perception, that is a person uses the same information that observers would use in judging the cause of his behavior. Thus, if extrinsic salient factors are available, a person will attribute his own behavior to these circumstances. However, if these external reinforcements are not present or are insufficient, he will attribute his own behavior to his own motive and desires.

A collory to this theory of self-perception is especially relevant in explaining children's behavior in sport situations. This "overjustification" hypothesis was the focus of a 1976 presentation at the American Educational Research Symposium.

Essentially, this hypothesis asserts that a person's intrinsic motivation to participate in a desirable activity may be undermined by inducing him or her to engage in this activity for an extrinsic reward or goal. The receipt of an external reward for participating in highly desirable activities may

"overjustify" the individual's reasons for participating. To quote Bem: "In short, a person induced to undertake an inherently desirable activity as a means to some ulterior end should cease to see the activity as an end in itself. Some examples of these ulterior ends include stars, certificates, and grades. These external reqards take away from intrinsic motivation."

When most kids come into our gyms or play areas, they come into the activities with high intrinsic motivation. Is it possible that through our grading and awards systems we decrease the strength of this internal motivation while we strengthen the need for external rewards? Consider for instance, our use of physical fitness awards, ribbons and medals for field day competitions, trophies and letters for varsity athletics, playing before an audience, or even getting one's name called out over the p.a. system. Granted, these rewards are integral parts of our programs, but must they be perceived as necessary evils? Is it possible that our entire athletic system is designed to cause a shift in intrinsic motivation to play to the external motive of playing solely for the reward? In fact, some people favor rewarding all who participate, not just the highly skilled competitors. If the "overjustification" model is correct, might this not be the worst possible thing to do? We direly need careful research into this area as many of our professional colleagues are already advocating this reinforcement strategy. It is not the size of the reward but simply that a reward is offered which results in a logical outcome to which the student can attribute his or her reason for performing.

We have now discussed the development of the adolescent self-concept; some implication of physical education to this formation, and the importance of role modeling in our classroom. The following is a brief summary of these three areas.

First, our sensory perception of reality is qualitatively different, and as one becomes older, their perception of reality relies less on sensory perceptions and more on the mental perceptions.

Second, there does exist an adoliscent self-image disturbance. Erick Erickson tells us that the adolescent must deal with the issues of a career decision and the establishment of his own family. While these may be salient concerns to the 18 or 19 year old, they do not concern the 12 year old. Conversely, it is the younger adolescent who is confronted with the body-image change of puberty.

Third, adolescents exhibit a degree of egocentrism when they perceive themselves as unique individuals, unable to be touched by the ills or benefits of society.

Fourth, the physical education teacher is perceived as a role model on the part of the teenager and in many cases as a significant model. The teacher must be aware that through our behavior we mirror the intrinsic worth of sport and the perspective of competition in our society. In addition, we are an important catalyst for providing quality self-discovery through play and games and movement experiences for the adolescent.

Lastly, motivation to participate in physical activity is perceived to be intrinsically based until extrinsic rewards are offered for participation.

I would like to finish on a positive note by offering some suggestions for our physical education programs based upon research in the areas just mentioned. These are not meant to be panaceas for our educational ills. Please accept them as suggestions that can and should be modified by you, dependent upon your situation, experiences, and perceptions of self as a teacher.

1. Play and games should be used for understanding the physical and social world. The root of the word game is "to leap joyously". Even though there is room for spontaniety in the game, the restrictive structure created by rules and societal pressures to win, too often precludes the true meaning of the root word. We can change, modify or even better, allow the students to make up their own games in the classroom.

2. Team games are important means of socialization. We must insure, maybe through innovative intraclass rules modifications, that no one needs to be repeatedly told "you block," or "you play right field today", thus removing them from the central activity. We are all aware that kids know the class skill hiearchy . The same kinds always get chosen last. How about choosing two students and then go through the class one by one, letting each student select the side they want to be on. This way no egos will get stepped upon. The students will divide themselves into competitive groups because runaway scores are no fun for anyone.

3. The younger adolescent is seeking order in his or her own shakey world. We need a degree of structure in our teaching environments that will allow for individual student differences; while not hindering the progress of the total class. Individualized learning units are excellent tools for meeting individual goals. Another strategy is the usage of teacher-student contracts.

4. Evaluation of self may be done through physical activity. Personal journals and logs of skills progression can be helpful as might be self-evaluation forms at the end of each class.

5. The relationship of games and sports to real life must be constantly discussed in class. These "teachable moments" are important because the adolescent is concerned with today and next week. Later life is a long way off and is usually an abstraction to the teenager. The relevance and process of planning a life-long, individual sports while de-emphasizing team sports. The opportunities for 25 year old touch football players and field hockey players are far fewer than those opportunities for adult tennis and golf participants.

6. The adolescent need for self-expression and creativity can be enhanced through movement exploration. This phase of physical education is not the exclusive province of the elementary school. We need to utilize this tool on the secondary level as well.

7. The self-confidence needed to assume a positive self-image can be gained through the conquering of a challenging physical activity. We must insure that every student has an ample opportunity to experience such a conquest. Our students can compete with their own past performance records. Positive experiences will spawn more positive experiences.

8. We can allow some time, even if its once or twice a month for plain, everyday play in the gym or playground. This play experience must be bound off from the daily pragmatic concerns of the student's everyday life. Students can engage in constructive role playing in the unstructured environment of free play (although supervised by the teacher). When adolescents engage in play, they move in a sphere where they are in charge and where they may reinterpret what objects are and what they do. Like the adult, daily activities force the adolescents to remain attentive to what will affect their welfare inside a larger world. But, in play, due to its separateness, they move inside a world where they are in charge and can thus be more at ease to pursue their pleasures. Why not allow the use of any equipment during a "playday" with the only stipulation being that the equipment cannot be used for its intended purpose. Let the students create their own game and play by their own rules on a "free-day."

In closing, I would like to paraphrase Robert Louis Stevenson: "To be what we are and to become what we are capable of becoming is the only end of life." We, as physical educators, have an opportunity to help our students achieve this lofty end.

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